How Did a Recall Election Get Started?

Following Chairman John Stoesser's election, alarmed citizens soon discovered his ignorance of government management and the inability to deliver on his shallow promises for "lowering taxes" and sought his removal from office according to state law. His supporters launched a recall campaign against Supervisor Montez as a tactical counter-measure, <u>Stoesser</u> claimed or wrongly performed the following:

- **Lower property assessments.**
  An appealing notion, but local government is bound by state laws to follow procedures to ensure equitable tax sharing. Basically, assessments must nearly match market values. Those figures are nearly equal in our town. Since a revaluation may cost an estimated $45-50,000, while having little or no impact on changing the assessed values, it may actually lead to a tax increase.
- **Lower employee wages.**
  This futile effort would have placed the town and employees in a breach of contract for failure to follow legally established negotiation procedures. Chairman Stoesser 's covert plan angered employees who were not informed.
- **Budget deficit shifting.**
  Chairman Stoesser ordered the clerk to transfer funds of $70,000 that were collected to pay for the new address signs into the general fund. It lowered the tax levy by a small amount; but to reverse the deficit, taxpayers were charged an additional $70,000 in special fees. The chairman deceived the town supervisors and the electors of this sleight of hand chicanery.
- **Draconian cuts in town budget.** No one likes wasting money on unnecessary expenses. However, your tax dollars are spent on four basic services: Ambulance and fire, police, seasonal road maintenance, and government administration. Although the electors approve the town budget, there are shortages in equipment and maintenance budgets that Stoesser would not discuss. In these tight times, a low budget helps everyone's wallet. But if needed services suffer for lack of proper planning, we all lose.
- **Increasing legal costs.** Although the town has had few legal issues, Chairman Stoesser frequently visited the town attorney for petty consultations that resulted in average expenditures of $500 per month in legal fees.
- **Covert discussions with Town auditor led to extra fees.**
  Chairman Stoesser inappropriately misrepresented the town board in private discussions with the Town's auditing firm, Baker Tilly, that there were illegal issues in the town's administration. An extra investigation found Stoesser's allegations false, but generated a fee of $4,050.00 for the town.
- **Delays in signing checks hurt town's relations with vendors.**
  Chairman Stoesser often refused to co-sign employee and vendor checks for timely billing cycles that would aggravate businesses and risk the town's credit rating.

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